

**REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 1, 2012**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, October 1, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Kotkin, Manousos, McAlister, Montinieri, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann. Absent: Councilors Hurley and Roberts

Also present: Fire Chief Bailey, Fire Marshal Dignoti; Brian Schroll, Fire Department; Mark Guerrero, Fire Department; Mike Turner, Town Engineer; Kathy Bagley, Parks and Recreation; Marie Massaro, Coordinator of the Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative; Jeff Bridges, Town Manager; RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Dolores Sassano led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Deputy Mayor Console asked for a moment of silence for George Wallace who passed away last week. He noted that George was one of his very special friends as well as very good influence on him and that he was a brave World War II Veteran. Deputy Mayor Console also stated that he plans to do a presentation for him at the next Memorial Day Parade.

PROCLAMATIONS

Mayor Hemmann presented the Proclamation for Fire Prevention Week and invited Chief Bailey, Brian Schroll and Mark Guerrero to the podium. Fire Marshal Anthony Dignoti reported that, to date, we have had 14 school and fire station visits planned for the next two weeks. He stated that the Fire Prevention Poster Contest will be starting for elementary schools for the 4th and 5th graders next week and commented that the Corn Fest went very well. Fire Marshall Dignoti next reminded everyone that they must have smoke detectors in their home and to make sure that they are testing them monthly to make sure that they work. He stated that if you need help in installing smoke detectors or replacing batteries to please call him at the Fire Marshal's office and they will send someone out to give you a hand. He also mentioned that cooking is the number one cause of home fires and injuries so when you cook, you should be very careful.

Mayor Hemmann next announced a presentation by the Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative formerly known as the Early Readiness Council.

Kathy Bagley, Parks and Recreation Director and Co-Chair of what was formerly known as the Readiness Council but is now called the Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative explained that they are here tonight to give a brief update of what they have been up to and what is coming up shortly. She stated that also with her tonight is Marie Massaro who is the Coordinator of the WECC and, together, we are going to give you a couple of words about what we've been doing and some new and exciting things to look forward to. Ms. Bagley stated that they have just completed their Community Plan in June which was a two-year process to learn what was going

on in Wethersfield as far as children from birth through eight and that they are going to be presenting that in about another week and a half to the community. She stated that they are excited because that Community Plan was submitted as part of a grant application from the Graustein Memorial Fund back in April and at the end of June, they found out that they funded us for another two years to continue the implementation of this Community Plan. She commented that we are very excited about that and that we were one of four communities in the discovery groups that were given a grant of this nature and are really looking forward with the implementation of the plan. Ms. Bagley noted that Maria Massaro is here tonight to give an update of where we are with the plan and our presentations with the community. She stated that we are really looking forward to getting out to the community after all this study and just talking to everyone in the community and to go forward with some strategies of how we do things even better in town. Ms. Bagley pointed out that the Early Childhood Collaborative is just that, it's a collaborative of many different groups in town with our partners with the school system, the Library, the Tri-town Y, the parents and different community organizations and is truly a collaborative effort to find out what everybody in the community thinks and how we move forward. She added that we are very excited about continuing this process and looking at some exciting things to do in the next two years which is what the grant is for. She then introduced Maria.

Maria Massaro echoed what Kathy said about getting the Option 1 grant which is the highest level grant that we were eligible for and only four communities received that award. She explained that part of the reason that we were awarded Option 1 was because we had demonstrated that there was a local commitment from the town in terms of allowing Kathy and other staff to spend some time working on this in addition to all their other responsibilities as well and the Central Connecticut Health District and their Community Health Educator, so that's part of the reason that we did have the success that we had and just wanted to echo our thanks over your support of that. Ms. Massaro also acknowledged that, Councilor Gerri Roberts, who is not here tonight, is our liaison from the Council; she has been very helpful to us in this process. Ms. Massaro explained that the highlights of the plan that we are going to be presenting echo back to the results statement which is that all children birth date in Wethersfield be healthy, developmentally successful learners and connected to the community and the Community Plan that you will see is broken down into those three major areas. She explained that in the area of health, there were two issues that were raised, one was prenatal care and stated that we have a somewhat above-average instance of inadequate prenatal care for pregnant women which means that they are not taken to their first doctor's appointment on time. So that is an issue that the data told us that was going on in Wethersfield more so than in area towns and we'll be looking at that to see if it is a transportation issue or access to providers so those are the types of things that we will be following up on. The other health issue was around healthy eating and physical activity for children from birth to eight. She stated that the data reflected that about 30% of our kids are characterized as obese or overweight so there will be strategies around on how to address those issues. Ms. Massaro next explained that in the area of Developmentally Successful Learners, there were two areas. One is around early learning being prepared to come to school and we looked at our kindergarten entrance inventory and found that some of our children are not ready for kindergarten, so we will have some strategies addressing that. She explained the other area is

around reading success and pointed to third grade CMT scores in reading and stated that a lot of our children, about 30 or 40 percent are not meeting the State goal in reading. She stated that we did break it down a little bit further from ELL students and students who are eligible for free and reduced priced meals and stated that the numbers were even more disconcerting for those children so we have various strategies to address those. She explained that the third area connected to Community ties back to the community survey from last Fall and stated that we sent out a survey to 2000 randomly selected households with a 30 percent response. She stated that about 40 percent of the people surveyed didn't feel connected to the town in any way so we are trying to find out what's going on and what are the barriers with people being involved in the town. She stated that they are going to be presenting this in the Plan and that the Council will be getting a copy of it. She added that it is very detailed, a lot of data, a lot of research and a lot of people worked really hard on this effort. She stated that they will be having a kick-off event on Thursday, October 10, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Community Center. There will be speakers who will present the plan and strategies and a call to action asking people in the community to sign on to help implement the plan.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he is glad to see an emphasis that was put on the reading skills and feels that the education system has made big mistakes over the years as far as how the reading skills have gone and he is glad that they are addressing that and doing something about it.

Mayor Hemmann commented that it is nice to hear the progress that was made because of all the hard work that was done.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd. had some questions regarding the Trust and the Pension Fund that was discussed the following week. Mr. Bridges explained to Mr. Young that the Pension Fund is well vested with a \$65 million dollar investment, and that the Health Care Fund (OPEB Fund) has \$3 million dollars to seed that with. Mr. Young also commented on the real estate sales in town and stated that there are a lot of homes that are not reported in the Vision Appraisal Report and commented that a record of transfer should be kept that shows the sales that are reported in the newspaper as well.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Deputy Mayor Console reported that the Safety Committee met on September 24th and in attendance was the Town Manager, Councilors Drake, Hurley, Roberts, myself and Chief Bailey and Deputy Chief Schroll. He noted that they had a discussion on the new fire truck specifications and that it was quite a lengthy report that the Committee presented. He stated that they are way off from doing anything at this point and are just gathering the facts, figures and issues to be discussed with the entire Council on what direction we are going to be taking. He commented on the price of the vehicle, and if this does happen, how will we fund it and if it will go to referendum, etc. and stated that it is in the infancy stage at this point, but that it did come with the specifications of what they would be looking for. Deputy Mayor Console explained that

we sent it back and asked for additional information on some other ideas that we had, so there is more that we need to do and we are probably going to meet in a couple of weeks again to go over some of the questions that we had and will then have a meeting with the entire Counsel and go from there under the direction of the Town Manager, myself, and our Committee.

Counselor Drake next reported that he attended the Library Board meeting last week and stated that during the last couple of years, the Library Board has been struggling a little bit with e-books because the rules for e-books are little different than a hard-copy book. He explained that basically, you can buy a hard-copy book and you own it, but with e-books you don't own it, you kind of rent it, so when you have someone use it, there is a cost. He stated that they ventured into a relationship with a subscription that there would be more e-books available and it would be set up as a trolling system and the library is trying to come up with a couple of new ways to try and get them all equal and available to the public. He also stated that the Library has a lot of little funds where they collect money and have collected enough money to put a communications system in the Community Room which is well needed and mentioned that they are doing a lot of good things at the Library.

Councilor Drake next reported that the School Building Project Committee for the High School will be doing a presentation to the Town Council on October 15th and stated that if anyone is interested in the project, and everyone should be because this is such a huge amount of money and effort by the town, that they should come down and listen to the presentation. He explained that they are moving ahead and are going to talk about the design and will have a lot of schematics and that they are going to, specifically, spend a lot of time on the parking. He stated that they also had their first real budget presentation done by the Architect and the Construction Manager which is basically the next step beyond the Referendum Budget Presentations which is really quite into the design. Councilor Drake commented that the budget numbers came up o:k and that they were not super high and seemed to be right on and that everyone was pretty well on track. He noted that on Monday they met with the neighbors at the High School to talk about the geothermal system and the impact it will have on the neighbors during the construction period and stated that most of the neighbors understood that there will be two or three months of noise in order to get this job done.

~~A-Councilor~~ Councilor Manousos asked if they were trying to get someone from the State to participate in that meeting?

Councilor Drake responded as of right now, no, but we are trying.

Councilor Drake reported that the next stage is parking and that there is a Consultant working on that in more detail versus the referendum stage and they are trying to get as much as they can for that meeting and will be prepared to discuss that as much as possible and stated that the parent drop-off situation will be addressed as well.

Mayor Hemmann reported that the mid-state collaborative between Newington, Rocky Hill, Berlin and Wethersfield continue to meet and are moving forward with the animal control. She

explained that they are working through their contract provisions and the Chiefs from the towns have worked out schedules and we will hear more about that in the near future.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he was notified that there was an article in the Hartford Courant regarding blasting activity at Cedar Mountain and asked the Town Manager if he knew anything about that.

Mr. Bridges responded that the Toll Brothers group has submitted a new application to the Newington Conservation Commission for a 48-block subdivision on the remaining parcel that they own. He explained that most of that land has been purchased or dedicated to the Town of Newington and that the article talked about some of the environmental issues and concerns of the neighborhood which includes the potential blasting for the creation for the home sites. Mr. Bridges stated that he believes there is a hearing coming up tomorrow or the following week but we have had people at those meetings and we've commented on their prior plan and we've talked to them about their current plan and getting access to the new data that they will be submitting.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that he was glad to see the article about Nott Street regarding the lack of activity that was going on there and asked if the Council could get a report with a list of all the fines that were given on the property on Nott Street.

Mr. Bridges replied that he could put something together.

Mayor Hemmann stated that she was able to attend the MDC Source for Seas Cleanup at the Wethersfield Cove on Saturday and stated that the volunteers had access to a boat and were able to cross the channel and picked up a 4-foot long wooden bench, a tire, many bags of trash and some drug paraphernalia. She stated that there were 30 young people from the Nature Center and from scouting troops and scout sisters who participated and worked really hard and this was a great opportunity for the community to see what is down there and to participate in the clean-up. Mayor Hemmann explained that they had devices to pick things up, they had plenty of trash bags to use and gloves so people were safely protected while they were doing it and she thanked all the volunteers.

Mayor Hemmann next mentioned that tomorrow night, October 2nd, at the Arch Street Tavern, there is a reception to support the November 6th ballot question for the MDC Commission's Clean Water Project and if anyone wants any information she has it here and will be happy to share that.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bridges reported that at the last meeting Councilor McAlister asked for some information from the Board of Education on Kindergarten and some of the other program implementations. He stated that he has spoken to the Superintendent and that he is getting all the elementary

schools to put that together and get it to us along with their year-end balance information. He stated that we are working through the units to finalize those numbers and commented that there was a glitch with the Board of Ed's processing so we should have that shortly.

Mr. Bridges stated that at the last meeting, the Council asked for whatever agreements had been memorialized with the neighbors at the High School. He stated that as of last week's management's report, we put in what was called the Cottone Field Rules which were adopted by the Council back in 2005 and that's probably the best memorialized of any agreements, but other than that, it has been kind of verbal agreements with that neighborhood on the use of those streets.

Councilor McAlister asked what the process would be to revisit those agreements because he thinks the High School is trying to put the parking in there anyway, eventually, to alleviate some of the current issues. He asked what steps would we need to entertain how many of the residents were in place at the time the agreement was made and how many are new, and he was just wondering what steps are needed to accomplish that.

TOWN CLERK COMMUNICATIONS

Dolores Sassano reported that she received the actual mock-up of the ballots that are going out and has sent in corrections to the question. She also stated that the Registrar's name was not completed as was on the voting list and that was also corrected. She stated that she just received the new mock-up and that we will be receiving the Absentee and the Presidential ballots this Friday.

Dolores Sassano next asked the Council to consider before the next Council meeting to change the November 5th Council meeting due to the Presidential Election taking place the next day and the 6:00 a.m. office hours of the Town Clerk's Office for that day.

COUNCIL ACTION

Nothing to report.

OTHER BUSINESS

Nothing to report.

BIDS

Deputy Mayor Console moved to **"TO AUTHORIZE A WAIVER OF THE BIDDING PROCESS AND TO AWARD A CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$94,000 TO THE MDC TO COMPLETE PAVEMENT RESTORATION OF MEADOWGATE ROA"**, seconded by Councilor Drake.

Mr. Bridges asked Mike Turner, the Town Manager to present this item. Mr. Bridges stated that the MDC has been working in this area for quite some time and now it is time to provide restoration to the streets. He stated that we have some money left over from last year's budget in anticipation of our participation of this project and asked Mike to come up and explained the details.

Mr. Turner explained that the MDC has VMS Construction, who is putting in the new sewer in Meadowgate, Randy Lane, Griswold and Fairlane Drive, working upstream from Maple. He explained that it was always our obligation that they pay for the restoration work of Meadowgate. He explained that in this case, what has happened is their alignment shifted during the design process and they were able to actually go under the south gutter line, so they installed the pipe, they've replaced the sidewalk and essentially they would end up being responsible to pave half the road and we didn't think that that was the right thing to do, so our participation would be to complete the road paving and pick up the north side of the road that way the entire road is surfaced from end to end all the way down from Maple all the way to the Randy Lane cul de sac. Mr. Turner explained that our road manager software estimated that was about \$140,000 for us to budget to do that if we paid for that road reconstruction. He stated that for this case here, we are able to utilize the MDC's contractor since they are out there already and asked them for a proposal to do the work and their proposal was well under our estimate to do that work. He stated that since we do not have a contract with this vendor, the MDC recommended that what we do is contract with the MDC and let them do this as a change order to their contract so that is what we are proposing.

Mayor Hemmann asked if we had put money away for this during the last paving season?

Mr. Turner responded, yes, this was one of the roads that was endorsed by the Council and the CIAC.

Mr. Bridges commented that this money isn't the new revenue.

A discussion then ensued amongst the Councilors and Mr. Turner regarding the redesign of the project along Randy Lane. After the discussion, the Counselors concluded that it would be best to table the motion in order to reevaluate the cost of the redesigned plan.

Councilor Manousos moved to **"TABLE THE MOTION TO AUTHORIZE A WAIVER OF THE BIDDING PROCESS AND TO AWARD A CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$94,000 TO THE MDC TO COMPLETE PAVEMENT RESTORATION OF MEADOWGATE ROAD"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved to **"AWARD THE ROCK SALT BID TO AMERICAN ROCK SALT, EASTERN SALT CO., AND INTERNATIONAL SALT CO. AT A COST**

PER TON OF \$56.54, \$59.55, AND \$65.70 RESPECTIVELY”, seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Mr. Bridges explained that this is the annual purchase of rock salt and stated that we usually ask for the approval of three bidders that way if one gets behind in delivery capability, we can always reach out to another vendor. He noted that the vendor prices from last year to this year have come down. Mr. Bridges stated that the quantities are listed in the document. He explained that we budgeted \$125,000 for rock salt for this year.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved to **“MOTION TO AUTHORIZE A CHANGE ORDER TO INCREASE THE CONTRACT WITH COLOSSALE CONCRETE, INC. FOR TOWN HALL STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS BY \$320,000”**, seconded by Councilor Drake.

Mr. Bridges explained that this is the final portion of a project that started in 2007 and has been funded by grants through the State of Connecticut for enhancements to the Silas Deane Highway and the Town Hall.

Mr. Bridges asked Mike Turner to present the details of the project.

Mike Turner explained that in 2011 the town was awarded a final STEAP Grant for the work outside of Town Hall in the amount of \$250,000. He explained that we checked with the Department of Economic Development and we can continue using Colossale as a contractor and award the balance of the work as a change order. Mr. Turner stated that because it was bid competitively, they still recognize that bid process and they recognize the fact that essentially we are using the 2007 prices when the project was initially bid and we are just carrying the project forward. He explained that the work essentially will be the completion of all the remaining brick paver walks, all of the trees, all of the landscaping in front of Town Hall, the remainder of the wall, the ornamental fence and a complete irrigation system in the front of Town Hall, as well as all of the streetscape furniture (benches, trash receptacles, and bike racks). He explained it is all 100% funded by these grant funds and that there is no town money in this process. He stated that the cost to do this as a change order is approximately \$320,000, and we have \$327,000 as the total balance in this STEAP account.

Mr. Bridges explained that the work that we are proposing here was bid back in 2007 and the cost was well over \$1,000,000 at the time and, as you know, we broke the project up into manageable savings and stated that this is the third and final segment of the work that had been bid in 2007.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the contractor, under the original bid, have the ability to say that it's too out-of-date and too old?

Mr. Turner responded yes, he certainly could do that and stated that we requested a change order

and he agreed to those terms holding the 2007 prices. Mr. Turner stated that it wasn't mandatory that he do that and that the town could have taken this remaining segment and gone out to bid, but again, are confident that they are not going to match the prices that they received in 2007.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if there would be something blocking off the air conditioning on the Silas Deane side of the building because it is an eye sore and asked if anything would be done to the parking lot side.

Mr. Turner responded yes, and that we have a separate project going on in the parking lot side and that they are working with the Men's Garden Club. He stated that they have hired a landscape architect to come up with a Master Plan of the parking lot side and that there is \$25,000 in the Town Capital Budget for plantings and improvements on that side.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

Nothing to report.

MINUTES

Councilor Manousos moved **"TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2012"**, seconded by Councilor McAlister.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:05 p.m., Councilor McAlister moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

APPROVED BY VOTE OF COUNCIL
October 15, 2012

Minutes were amended on page 4 to reflect a statement made by Councilor Manousos.